



Fordland Middle School

District: Fordland R-III Schools

Enrollment: 155

Grade Range: 6-8



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The mission of the Fordland R-III School District is to provide an education for all students that will prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning.

Fordland Middle School, located 20 miles east of Springfield, Missouri, is home to 155 sixth through eighth grade students. Fordland Middle School is the only middle school in Fordland R-III School District, a rural district that draws many of its students from family farms in surrounding Webster County. Nearly half (47 percent) of Fordland Middle School's students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. The staff at Fordland Middle School embraces a school motto of "Every student matters" to express their commitment to ensuring that all students, regardless of adversity, develop to their fullest potential.

Creating a "Success School" Focused on Academic Improvement

In 2000, Fordland School District was identified as a "success school." As a result, Fordland Middle School faculty and staff committed themselves to creating a school atmosphere that promotes academic improvement and dedicated themselves to goals designed to help students develop to their fullest potential:

- Providing study guides for all students before tests
- Being available for students to ask questions before and after school
- Investigating why a student is earning a failing grade in a subject area or on a test
- Reteaching and retesting students in order to achieve success
- Going out of their way to befriend a student who has behavior problems in the school setting
- Making necessary modifications for all students
- Treating all students in the way that they would like their own children to be treated

Against the backdrop of these goals and their own renewed commitment, Fordland Middle School teachers and administrators analyzed their curriculum and explored current research practices to determine how they might improve student performance. As a result, the curriculum at Fordland Middle School has truly become a living document. Teachers meet frequently to analyze Missouri Assessment Program scores using Clear Access. The curriculum is revised yearly to reflect content and process standards on which students need to improve. The school has supported their efforts by providing intense training on performance-based teaching and assessment.

Fordland Middle School teachers recognize that promoting excellence for all students means approaching the learning process in different ways to meet students' unique needs. Teachers engage students through varied and engaging strategies, including cooperative learning, performance-based assessments, reading and writing across the curriculum, and interdisciplinary teaching, continuously trying different approaches until all students have achieved success.

“BEST PRACTICE IN ACTION...”:

- ***Civil War Showcase*** – Fordland Middle School eighth graders participate in a Civil War showcase competition each spring. Students construct interactive displays based on a topic related to the Civil War that they have researched throughout the year.
- ***Accelerated Reading*** – Fordland Middle School students set personal reading goals each quarter and earn points to buy prizes in the “AR” store. Most students increase their reading level by two to three years in the first year of the program.

A variety of Fordland Middle School programs support teachers’ efforts to ensure that all students achieve academic success. The Eager and Gifted Learners Exploring (EAGLES) program offers gifted and talented students the opportunity to expand their learning. A full time at-risk teacher facilitates the SUCCESS program, enabling at-risk students to receive individual help during the school day. Teachers assist students with special needs through self-contained classrooms, resource rooms, individual instruction, expressive and receptive language therapy, and small group education. Incentives such as the 100% Club and the “All Satisfactory Party” encourage Fordland Middle School students to achieve academic success.

Fostering Personal Growth

Fordland Middle School is committed to helping students experience a successful transition from childhood to early adolescence. To accomplish this, the school atmosphere supports students socially and emotionally, as well as academically. All students begin the day with an assigned advisor who checks their assignment books, assists them with homework, and takes an opportunity to personally get to know them. Student advisors call parents of all absent students during the first hour of the day and keep parents apprised of student progress every two weeks.

“WORDS OF WISDOM”

- ***“Above all else, our school must be relevant to the community it serves.”***
- ***“We believe that parents/guardians have definite responsibilities in education. They need to have basic confidence in the school and they need to impart this confidence to the students.”***

A Student Assistance Team meets monthly at Fordland Middle School to refer students to appropriate programs. Free and reduced price meals, clothing, school supplies, health services and hygiene products are available for students who need them. Faculty and staff emphasize character development at all levels of the educational process by integrating respect for self and others throughout the curriculum and sponsoring a variety of extracurricular activities which encourage students to pursue their personal interests.

Garnering Community Support

Fordland Middle School enjoys considerable community support for its program. The school and community are partners in enhancing the district’s goals. The Fordland community has never failed to pass a bond issue to provide excellent facilities and programming for its students. Local businesses donate funds to purchase school supplies for students who need them. The Fordland Parks Department works with the school to provide activities for students, offering evening and weekend basketball, soccer, and Mighty Mite football. In return, Fordland Middle School students participate in trash pick-ups, beautification projects, Webster County Literacy Projects, and St. Jude’s Mathathon, and organize drives for families experiencing difficult situations.

Fordland Middle School distinguishes itself as a small school with big expectations. Every student matters, and teachers are dedicated to their mission of helping each one of them develop to his/her fullest potential.